

The  
Tempest:  
As A Lyrical Dram  
(1850)



Morris Barnett



# THE TEMPEST,

AS

## A LYRICAL DRAMA.

BY

MORRIS BARNETT.

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"Ben! 'Ben! Co—Callben—  
Has a new master—!"

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✓  
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J. MITCHELL, 33, OLD BOND STREET.

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TO M. EUGENE SCRIBE.

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SIR,—

To you, the greatest dramatic genius of the age, whose invention is fertile and prolific as Lope de Vega's, I dedicate this slight essay on "THE TEMPEST, AS A LYRICAL DRAMA."

For the last twenty years your dramas have been the storehouse to which English playwrights and managers have chiefly resorted for the delectation of the English public. For their behoof your dramas have been imitated, remodelled, and translated. Partaking, therefore, of the gratitude which every sincere lover of dramatic literature must bear you, I offer the following pages, intended to prove, by exposition of the text, the apt appreciation, the fine discernment, and the true modesty with which

you have treated *The Tempest*, as the ground-work of a musical poem.\*

That Plautus and Terence should have imitated Menander, and Molière transmuted the Latin ore into gold of his own, raises but small wonder, for in these originals the thoughts and the language possessed classical perspicuity; but to you greater honour redounds, inasmuch as to the writers and critics of France Shakspeare has been as a "scalded fountain." Voltaire, Geoffroy, Ducis, and Dumas have presented but caricatures of his glorious creations: the features distorted, the expression lost, and the fine spirit with which the bright imaginings of the English

\* Paris, 24th December, 1846.

Monsieur,—

Voilà le poème que vous avez bien voulu me demander sur *Le Tempête* de Shakspeare. Même en traduisant cet ouvrage en opéra, j'ai respecté le plus que j'ai pu votre immortel auteur. Toutes les situations musicales que j'ai créées, ne sont que le développement de ses idées premières, et je dois dire puisque l'honneur en revient encore à Shakspeare, qu'il est peu de sujets, plus admirablement disposés pour la musique.

Je ne doute point que confié par vous à un habile compositeur, ce poème ne soit l'occasion d'un très beau et très grand succès musical.

Je vous le souhaite de tout mon cœur, monsieur, et m'estimerai heureux d'y avoir contribué pour ma part, si faible qu'elle soit.

Daignez agréer, monsieur, l'assurance de ma considération la plus distinguée,

EUGÈNE SCRIBE,

De l'Académie Française.

A M. Lumley.

DEDICATION.

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poet are instinct clouded by ignorance and falsified by prejudice.

How inadequate is this humble tribute offered to your genius, I am deeply conscious; happily the great poet Ariosto has furnished me with an apology of which I hope you will accept the expression in his own words—

————— "opere di parole è l' inchiesta  
Nè ch'è poco vi dia, da impetrar cosa,  
Chè quando poco dar, tutto vi dona."

I am, Sir,

Your sincere Admirer,

MORRIS BARNETT.

## THE TEMPEST.

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ABOUT two centuries and a-half separate us from the afternoon when the cavaliers of the Court of Elizabeth drew their chairs upon the primitive stage of a Bankside playhouse, and an eager mob of London citizens thronged from booth and stall, and precinct and ward, to see enacted for the first time, before scenery of rudely-hung mats, and in the glare of an afternoon's sun, a new play by William Shakespere, called *The Tempest*.

Is it too much to conceive that then, as now, the production of a new drama by a favourite author was heralded by many rumours of its merits and its character?—that those gentle cavaliers and beauteous dames loved to revel in the bright flush of poetic fancy which then flung its golden blazonry across the land—were not altogether without interest in the whispered criticisms which, stealing forth from the study of the poet, or the 'tiring-room of the actors, told in this instance strange and glad tidings of the rare qualities, and the quaint devices, and the dainty beauties of the forthcoming play?

Truly the dramatic guild smug of the age, as they loitered, sniffing their pouncet-boxes, in the corridors of Whitehall, or the waiting-rooms of the brave lodgings of my Lords of Essex, of Southampton, and of Leicester—or perhaps in more humble ranks of connoisseurship, as they paced the echoing aisles of crowded Paul's, would have



rare budgets of dramatic gossip to unlade and deal around.

"Look you, my masters, this new play of Will Shakespere's be different from almost all he hath yet set forth. It maketh not with history, nor is the scene laid in any known forest, or court, or duchy, or kingdom. It is a most rare and quaint fancy of the brain, full of things new and strange; not so much the semblances of earthly men as brave shapes of the air, which do inhabit a land of faëry. For quaintness and goodly play o' the wit, it is as a masque. All the story is of enchantment, elves of the air, and demons of the nether abysm, and with them love—not gross and clayey, my masters, but the spirit love of most dainty souls, truly the most potent enchantment of them all.

"And such a tale, as well you may conceive, is much set forth by the melody of gentle music, as though, my masters, from the mouth of a delicate sprite sweetest notes should fitly come; such being, indeed, as a man may conceive, an harmonious and natural mother tongue of these airy forms which sport through all the play. And so, conceive you, there will be rare tickling for brain and ear—a magic poem set forth in a magic isle, with enchanters, elves of the elements, brave monsters, and music—music of might, my masters, which soundeth from the air, the earth, the entrails of the knolled trees; which leadeth astray, wrapped in its secret influences, princes and kings; which is chaunted by flying choirs, and riseth and falleth in all its subtle and entrancing tide at the solemn accents of a great magician!"

But rude, very rude, were the means then in vogue of realising to the actual senses of eye and ear the pageantry and the rich musical colouring which so naturally befit a fairy drama. The very fact of *Miranda*—incomparably

the most delicate creature of earthy mould ever devised by the soaring conceptions of poetry—the very fact of Miranda being played by a bearded man affords a sufficient index to the scale of clumsy grossness by which the visions of the poet's imagination were to be translated into palpable action at the Fortune or the Globe. It is more than probable that Prospero's sea-girt dominion—its grots and moonlit bays, its glades and rocks—in short—

—————"All the qualities of the isle,  
The fresh springs, brine pits, barren place and fertile,"

were represented to the audience merely by scrolls attached to rude curtains of matting or tapestry, and which scrolls appealed to the reader's imagination to conjure up before his mind's eye the beauties of the region first portrayed in the poet's brain. But important as scenic illusion must be in such a drama as *The Tempest*, there was another element: that of music—an element in which it is easy to see that the whole play was in the imagination of the author steeped and bathed, and by which almost every scene was to have been inspired and richly coloured, which, in all probability, was but scantily and meagrely supplied.

To read in the silence of missing harmony the play of *The Tempest*, is like glancing over a score uninterrupted by the realisation of the musical sounds which the bars denote. In no one of Shakespeare's plays do stage directions occur so often as in *The Tempest*, demanding "sweet musick," "solemn and strange musick," "soft musick,"—music, in truth was, in the poet's imagination, an actual and necessary part of the drama. Scene after scene is but a poetic skeleton, intended to be filled up and vivified by that vocal and instrumental harmony which was to be in the whole composition, as the genial and inspiring breath of life. In *The Tempest* music is no

accidental grace, no mere means of heightening efforts produced by other means. On the contrary, music from the beginning was made part of the machinery of the play. Music unfolds ideas dimly hinted at by the poetry, elaborates ideas vaguely shadowed forth by the spoken words. Music leads their steps astray, or guides them aright. Music terrifies them, lulls them, soothes them, enchants them. The whole fancy-woven world in which they live is a world of music. Music is the magic of Prospero, and the only charm which softens the bestial nature of Caliban. For listen to the foul offspring of the pent-up witch—

"Be not afraid; the air is full of noises,  
Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.  
Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments  
Will hum about mine ears; and sometimes voices,  
That, if I then had wak'd after long sleep,  
Will make me sleep again: and then, in dreaming,  
The clouds, methought, would open, and show riches  
Ready to drop upon me; that, when I wak'd,  
I cried to dream again."

To which Stephano, delighted, replies:—

"This will prove a brave kingdom to me, where I shall have my music for nothing."

And again, upon the first appearance of Ferdinand, he exclaims—

"Where should this music be? 'T' the air, or the earth?"

— "Sitting on a bank,  
Weeping again the king my father's wreck,  
This music crept by me on the waters,  
Allaying both their fury, and my passion,  
With its sweet air."

Is it too much to say that in writing *The Tempest* Shakespeare created the Libretto of the first Opera? Is it too

much to say that some vague prophetic impulse—the reflected vision of one of those momentary glances vouchsafed to the inspiration of genius—"adown the stream of time," called up in the poet's mind the idea of what might be effected by the marriage of the immortal arts, and perhaps almost unconsciously to himself, guided the pen which traced the mingling lyric and dramatic glories of *The Tempest*? And if it be so,—if the poet of the rude old playhouse on the Bankside of Southwark became sensible by the prompting of his own genius that such a tale as that of Prospero's enchantments, Miranda's love, Ariel's gentle spiriting, and Caliban's gnome-like spite, would be best conveyed to the minds of his eager and poetry-loving audience through the mingling agency of sweet articulate words, and sweet inarticulate sounds,—is it too much to suggest that if, in the present stage of the world's civilisation, in the present era of the world's art, the lofty forehead and the gentle presence of He of Avon had been familiar to us, not from antique painting or sepulchral bust, but because he walked the world a brother man amongst us,—is it too much to suggest that the Shakespeare of the nineteenth century would have evoked all the sister arts, poetry, music, painting, to his aid in the setting forth of the sweet airy tale of the Enchanted Isle, and that he would have written the luscious poem which, married to immortal sounds, would have been called

#### "THE TEMPEST,"

##### AN OPERA?

What the orchestral and vocal resources were upon which Shakespeare had to depend in the elaboration of a dramatic story, the very spirit of which was to have been set forth by music, can never now be ascertained. The probability is that they were scanty and rude. Ariel is introduced

playing upon no higher class of instrument than the pipe and tabor; and granting that the trumpet was blown, and the harp struck; that virginal and dulcimer tinkled their best; and that a lusty chorus of tenor and bass represented the invisible choirs which were to chaunt the soft melodies floating past upon the subtle air,—all these musical adjuncts, in their then rude and unfinished condition, must have afforded but a faint and maimed idea of the strains, the mental echo of which we may suppose to have arisen in all its fitful beauty in the poet's brain as he wrote his directions for solemn or for strange music. The very fact, however, of Shakespeare's determination to trust the development of a great portion, not only of the sentiment, but of the actual progress of the scenes to music, comparatively miserable as the resources must have been which he had for this purpose at his disposal, is a very curious and convincing proof of what he must have deemed the absolute necessity of the aid of music to the interpretation of the story. Glorious as was his poetry, melodic in its sweetness, harmonious in its manly numbers, he still knew that poetry alone was not a sufficient exponent of his fairy tale. He was dealing with scenes and creatures of high imagination; he was seeking to transport his audience from this gross familiar world to a realm of purest fancy, where, save love, no human power prevailed; and he felt that perfectly to accomplish such a task he must summon to his aid every bewitching influence, every fascinating spell, every combination of sweet sound, whether articulate or inarticulate, which the wit or the fancy of man has ever devised to seize upon enraptured human nature, to waft it upwards to higher and purer realms of mind, and so by witchery of sound and sense to "lap it in Elysium." Will it, then, be said that the idea was irrelevant, inconsequential, inconsistent—the idea of carrying

out now, in the nineteenth century, with all the means and appliances we possess, the evident intention of Shakspeare, and invoking in one new representation of *The Tempest* the full and varied powers of that element of music of which the great poet must have dreamt in his first conception of the play, and the thrilling cadences of which must have arisen in his brain, mingling with the very ideas which floated together to create the characters of Prospero, of Caliban, of Ariel, and of Miranda?

Nor is it difficult to discern the reasons which may have weighed upon Shakspeare's mind when he determined upon treating *The Tempest* as so eminently a musical subject. All dramatic representations being to a greater or less degree removed from reality, make in a greater or less degree demands upon the imagination of the audience, whose interest in the progress of a piece must depend upon their according a certain degree, not, of course, of actual credence, but of a sort of *quasi* belief to the perils and the adventures, the joys and the woes of the mimic personages who appear before them. Now, it is evident that the farther removed from the events, the sympathies, and the emotions of every-day life the interest of a play may be, the more numerous and the more powerful must be the influences to which the poet appeals in order to raise the fancy of his auditors up to the elevated level on which the personages of his drama play their parts. A trifling call upon the imagination may enable a general auditory to place the necessary dramatic belief in a piece the scene of which is laid in drawing-rooms and streets, such as they live and walk in, and the personages of which are men and women dressed in the same fashion, and influenced by similar motives and sentiments to those animating the frame-work of general society. But the cause is different; a more powerful appeal must be made to a higher and less

easily invoked faculty where the scene is laid in regions of pure fancy, peopled by personages derived not from the observation and the worldly wisdom of the comic dramatist, but from the pure inspiration and unshackled genius of the poet. When we are called upon to ignore all experience—to forget the unchangeable workings of the laws of nature—to soar from the familiar soil and influences of our material world up into a realm of pure enchantment, where music is played by invisible spirit-choirs, where the wand of the magician has powers to bring forth the tempest or to disperse the clouds, where airy goblins frolic above the tree-tops, and swart gnomes, the fell offspring of witch and demon, crawl amid the morasses,—when, we say, we are transported to such a region, and asked to lend that degree of credence to the reality of the scene necessary for the purposes of dramatic interest, then it behoves the poet—and this was what Shakespeare felt—to aid his audience by any means of illusion, by any device of art-witchery, by every influence which can enthrall the senses and render them willing slaves to the requirements of the brain.

And in invoking the gentle but the powerful aid of music for this purpose, Shakespeare did not think that he was degrading his own mission as a poet; he felt that the marriage of sweet words to sweet sounds can never be a *mesalliance*, and that nothing is more legitimate than the union of the arts for the purpose of conveying to the general mind the high and delicate creations born of loftiest imagination. Besides, he had great authority to teach him. Notwithstanding Ben Jonson's sneer, it is not probable that Shakespeare was quite unacquainted with the traditions of the antique drama of Greece. He may not have been able to read the lofty measure of the tragedians of Athens; but this at least it was likely he knew: that

the sublime scenes which *Æschylus* wrote, and to which *Themistocles* listened—these dramatic inspirations whose personages were heroes and demigods, and the performance of which was viewed almost in the light of a religious solemnity,—he knew, we repeat, that the speeches of actors in the Greek drama were chaunted to the sound of pipe and lyre; that a chorus speaking or singing in unison was part of the machinery of the stage; and that the severe and antique tales of the will and the power of patriarchal kings, bent by the will and power of the gods, and the will and power of the very gods bent and broken by the everlasting decrees of the Fates who ruled before great *Chaos*,—he knew that the effect of these, the very highest themes which would impress and awe the human heart, was heightened and set forth by rude, perhaps, but doubtless by solemn and awful sounding music.

But granting that spoken language is the ordinary and natural exponent of the ordinary and natural and strictly human drama, may it not be successfully argued that there is a poetic fitness and harmoniousness, when dealing with personages of a supernatural world—the pure creations of the fancy—in changing the very forms in which thought shall be expressed, and making music the mother tongue of these enchanted realms? We have already insisted upon the necessity for rivetting the attention to a lofty and unusual theme, by an agency which is at once sensuous and intellectual; but we contend that the very nature of that agency, its own sustained and intrinsic charm, renders it a fitting and a *quasi* natural medium for the converse of beings, human but in part, poetic and elevated in conception, and bound by no earthly or elemental rules. We all know how naturally the idea of *fairies* is associated with that of sweet music: our nursery tales, our popular songs, our traditional legends have alike instilled the

idea. Who has not heard of the ringing of fairy bells—of the chime of fairy music, swelling in the pale moonlight as the elfin court held its revels upon the shaven turf, beneath the gnarled oak tree? And how purely fairylike in its sentiment and its spirit is *The Tempest*. In the enchanted isle of the banished duke almost every species of elfin and necromantic superstition finds its poetical exponent and representative. The idea of Prospero—so far as that idea is derived from external sources—seems a compound of the picturesque notion of the *Moyen age* wizard, half sage, half enchanter, learned in the natural and the occult sciences, and that of the potent magician of the East, the grandly-gifted power who could split mountain ridge and dry up deep seas; who could summon the painted powers of the air to work his behests; who carried in his brain the magic formula engraved upon the signet of Solomon, and emperor-like lorded it over the fays and genies of Persia and Cathay.

And then there is Ariel—a combination in its individual nature of all that is abstractly loving, yet alily characteristic in the elfin world. Ariel combines the qualities of the Eastern fay and the Western familiar spirit. It is a thing perfectly removed from all human likeness, yet not from all human sympathies. In some respect it is indefinite. A moral shadowiness invests it. It is sexless. It is impatient of restraint, yet grateful to its lord. It is powerful, but not all-powerful. It loves the pure and the beautiful, for in itself it is pure, and beautiful, and true; the absolute abstraction into which there would be a danger of such a conception falling is most skilfully relieved and connected, by the exhibition of that instinctive and graceful love of frolic which is the common quality of all of fairy kind, which Oberon, even in his regal dignity, does not smother, and which Prime Minister Puck is but

too ready gleefully to carry into execution. If ever there was a creature formed to live in an atmosphere of harmony, it is the Ariel of *The Tempest*. If ever there was a creature whose words would flow in melodic gusts of music most artless, yet most divine, from its tongue, that creature is Ariel. In conceiving the attendant sprite of the mighty magician, Shakespere drew a creature only to be developed, only to be enshrined in the music which seems its birthright.

We pause but for a moment over Caliban, to note the dramatic skill which placed such a conception in juxtaposition to the sprite of Prospero. Here again we find combined the elements of gloomy, as in Ariel there are those of bright, fanciful, and sunny superstition. If the nature of Prospero's messenger approach to that of the angel, the soul of his slave touches upon the composition of the fiend. The Eastern notion of the ghoul, the Italian-born idea of the ogre, and the more Northern conceptions of the hag, of the slaving "lubber fiend," and the household goblin drudge, all enter into the composition of the creature, at once stupid and malignant, demonic in its mind, and fleshly in its mould, who, inheriting something of the supernatural malice of its mother, yet wallows in the grossest sensual pleasure, and takes a drunkard for its god. Notwithstanding, however, we still feel that Caliban belongs more to the supernatural than the natural world; there is in him the malignant blood of his accursed dam. If Ariel, therefore, bespeak him in melody—the spirit tongue—why then let the goblin drudge reply in grumbling and dissonant harmonies.

We have now, we think, demonstrated the positions which we laid down for proof. We have shown how much importance Shakespere attached to the element of music in the composition of *The Tempest*; we have

shown, indeed, from the very nature of the play—from the fact that its scene and its personages are both, in a great degree, supernatural—the necessity which existed for the introduction of such an agency as music; and we hope we do not go too far when, after such proof, we appeal to all our readers whether, in the idea of reproducing *The Tempest* as an opera, we do not seek to carry out the plainly-indicated idea of the poet—to clothe that idea with the musical drapery which is necessary for the due development and exhibition of its fair proportions—and thus, in the full spirit of reverence and of artistic care, at length to realise, with all the aids of modern art, all the resources of European famed genius, the thoughts which floated through Shakespeare's mind as, listening to the inspiration of his fancy, he imagined an ideal embodiment of the sights and sounds, the poetry and the music, which constitute *The Tempest*.

The most devout and unbending admirer of Shakespeare, the most rigid stickler for, on ordinary occasions—for the text, the whole text, and nothing but the text, will not, we think, contend that in an adaptation and a development such as that now offered to the public, the play in its original shape could have been strictly followed by the composer. The requirements of modern opera are very different from those of the Elizabethan drama, even when, as in the case of *The Tempest*, the germ of the operatic spirit shines plainly visible from every scene. The more level portions of the dialogue must inevitably be shortened for the purposes of recitative; the expression of sentiment, feeling, and emotion must assume that lyric form which is the essence of the drama as interpreted by music; the action of the whole piece must be simplified, and cast with those severe and massive proportions best suited to the lyric stage; and, finally, it is

of essential importance that those elements in the play which are most operative in their nature, which can be most fittingly represented by means of music: the adventures of the lovers, and the fairy and supernatural machinery of the play, should be extended and developed with all that ingenuity and fertility of resource which, by the combination of sister arts, we are enabled to apply to the modern stage. The problem set before the adapter to solve was the production of a play which, while it should answer the requirements of the musician and fulfil all the conditions of the modern lyrical drama, should be also a faithful transcript, in respect to character, sentiment, and chief situation, of the original poem—the changes introduced being always in the nature of natural development—a declaration of that sentiment always instinct with the elemental spirit of the whole work, and always preserving the characters in the same relative situations, and performing the same offices in the progress of the dramatic action as were allotted to them in the first instance by the creative mind of their great originator. But there was still another condition to be fulfilled. The *liquette* required was not a mere thing of shreds and patches, clumsily torn from the original fabric of the play and stitched together by the rude hands of a dramatic botcher. There is no more cheering symptom of the progress of the lyric drama as a work of art than the necessity now felt, more and more every day, that an opera should be also an interesting and artistically-constructed play—that dialogue and music should be dramatically fitted and fitting—that poet and musician should mutually help each other,—a continuous and regularly-developed dramatic interest is now expected, and rightly expected, at the hands of both. An opera is no longer a connected concert sung in costume and upon the stage;

it must be a play set forth in music, and a play interesting, consistent, artistic, disfigured by no jarring and impossible elements, marred by no listless and sluggish lack of progressive incident, of rapid and continuous onward march.

This is a necessity which could hardly fail of being understood by M. Scribe, himself one of the main agents in bringing about this salutary revolution in the *libretto* department of modern opera. Every amateur knows but too well the wrongs which composers have received at the hands of *librettists*. How many of the operas of Mozart and Rossini are either utterly laid aside for dramatic purposes, or maintain but a feeble and struggling hold upon the stage, solely from the dramatic nullity, the lazy inaction, or the absolute unintelligibility or absurdity of the acted stories to which they have been fitted? Need we refer to the *Zelmira* of the Italian, or to the *Zauberflöte* of the German? A case occurs which, to the present matter, comes closer still. One of the gorgeous fictions of Shakespere has already furnished subject matter for modern musical inspiration. But in what shape was the tragedy of the Bard placed before the musician? Answer, all who recollect the *libretto* of the *Otello*.

Reminiscences of a very different character will attach to the second adaptation for musical purposes of a play by Shakespere. We have indicated the reasons why the selection in this instance was made, and the general principles with which, for the purpose in view, it was necessary that the adapter should proceed. That these principles have been applied with the most perfect appreciation of, and veneration for Shakespere's immortal work—that they have been acted upon with the finest artistic skill, with the most profound dramatic knowledge, and the most consummate dramatic tact, the name of M. Eugene

Scribe will be a sufficient guarantee. Incomparably the most fertile, as he is incomparably the most refined, the most skilful, and the most successful of living dramatists, M. Scribe brought to the task before him a mind exquisitely fitted to appreciate the pure and sustained flights of imagination—the lofty and severe conception of character—the brilliant yet the delicate play of fancy which flings its many-hued and gaily-dancing glitter over the dramatic poem of *The Tempest*. For the perfect appreciation of the priceless materials committed to his charge—the antique dramatic diamond to be set in the glancing circle of modern opera—M. Scribe was of all men the best fitted in other respects to adapt the scenes of the immortal poet to music, of which the highest praise will be to say that it soars and dazzles and scintillates with the deathless words with which it is to be associated.

Of the manner in which the task has been performed the public will speedily have an opportunity of judging. It will be presented with a *libretto* admirably adapted in the first place to the requirements of the lyric stage, the sentiment of each successive scene being elaborated in musical soliloquies, and worked out in animated concerted pieces. The spectator will note the neatness and the workmanship in the adaptation; the happy skill with which the sentiments and emotions of the personages have been wrought into sparkling, graceful, and easily-flowing verse, with the perfect knowledge of, and command over dramatic construction which brings out every point in the progress of the play with that felicitous theatrical point and *scène* the facility of producing which is only to be attained by the longest and deepest study—not merely of dramatic necessities, but of stage technicalities. Nor will the listener fail to observe that even in those portions of the *libretto* when incidents and combinations are introduced not to be

found in the original play, that these incidents and combinations are perfectly in unison with the tone and spirit of the text, and that they, in fact, appear to be the natural result of the chain of circumstances bent, forged by Shakespeare, and continued for a few links more by his modern adapter. In all these introduced passages, we repeat, the spirit and sentiment of the ancient poem are carried out with the most scrupulous fidelity. This is so important a point that we shall be forgiven if we pause for a moment to illustrate our meaning by an example.

M. Scribe, availing himself of the agency of Sycorax, who is supposed to be still imprisoned beneath a rock, contrives that the witch shall place it in the power of her son, Caliban, to breathe three wishes, the prayer of each of which shall be immediately fulfilled. Then comes the exquisite development of the half demon half brutish nature of the mis-formed goblin. "Wish, my son," shrieks the sorceress, "that thy mother may be delivered from her bondage." Without absolutely refusing, Caliban postpones the prayer. Selfish vengeance and brutish greed engross his soul. As each wish is formed and accomplished, the voice of the still-imprisoned witch thunders forth curses from her magic den amid the rocks. In this finely and subtly conceived ingratitude of her offspring, when filial duty is put in competition with selfish indulgence, will be found the perfect and dramatic development of the nature of Prospero's malignant slave.

We proceed to sketch an outline of the general idea of *The Tempest* as adapted by the tasteful tact of M. Scribe to operatic purposes. The curtain rises upon the storm-tossed ship at sea; mingling with the howl of the elements, choirs of invisible spirits chaunt the coming vengeance of the magician, Prospero, and Ariel alighting upon the deck, the conscience-stricken ravings of the

tyrant Duke and the weakly-consenting King. The storm increases. The crew wail and pray aloud; the spirit-chorus mock their agonies, and after a magnificent *crescendo*, the curtain falls on the ship, which goes into splinters amid the breakers which gird the Enchanted Isle.

So much is prologue. Then comes the first act of the opera. The scene is the Grot of Prospero, where the sage necromancer, drawing inspiration from his magic book, proclaims his power over the elements, and the manner in which he has exercised it to bring his usurping brother within his power. Miranda speedily appears upon the scene, and in a delicious *cavatina* are expressed the budding sentiments and half painful, half pleasing emotions and impulses of coming womanhood. In the graceful verses of M. Scribe the tone and spirit of the corresponding scene in the original play are beautifully preserved. Then the atmosphere of dainty and poetic song is clouded. Caliban appears, and in a powerfully-effective and intensely-dramatic *trio* the characters of the three interlocutors are further developed. The innocent loveliness and exquisite purity of Miranda, the stern wisdom of Prospero, and the brutal nature of Caliban, who dares to wish that he were again king of the isle, with Miranda for his queen. Contrast is the key-stone of the dramatic arch. Miranda withdraws to her chamber, Caliban slinks into his den, the elfin form of Ariel swoops from above the tree tops as in warblings he informs his lord of all that he has done, and of the safe bestowal of the crew of the wrecked ship. Prospero gives charge to his attendant sprites to watch over Miranda, and enchanter and sylph disappear. Here are heard the strains of the invisible chorus of the air, who guide Ferdinand's steps by their luring music. The meeting of the prince and the gentle and pure-souled heroine follows; and after the meeting, as Prospero had well foreseen, love. The exquisite Shake-

aperian scene is preserved in all its original depth of colour and delicacy of tint, and with the re-appearance of Prospero—his feigned anger but secret satisfaction at the success of his schemes—the humble submission of the prince, and eloquent and love-lorn pleadings of Miranda for the stranger, the act closes.

The second act opens with a malediction scene for Caliban, and an invocation of his mother, Sycorax. The witch is not yet dead, but imprisoned beneath the weight of massive rocks, chained there by the arts of Prospero. The dam of Caliban is not slow to answer the prayer of her cub. Upon the cliffy ridge grows a bunch of scarlet flowers, of potent might for charm and spell. These Caliban is directed to pluck, and so armed is at liberty to form three wishes, each of which will be miraculously granted. The conversation is interrupted by the entrance of Prospero and Ariel. The banished Duke again recommends his child to the care of the blithesome sprite, and passes on. Now comes the moment for Caliban. Vengeance upon Prospero is that for which he thirsts; and that vengeance his imprisoned dam informs him will be complete when he has ravished Miranda from her sire. Headless of the groans of Sycorax, and her entreaties that his first wish will be for her liberation, Caliban waves the magic flowers, in an instant shuts Ariel in the trunk of a mighty tree,\* and seizing upon the now un-

\* It will be seen that M. Scribe has in this, as in similar instances, but elaborated the thought of Shakspeare; for Prospero has threatened Ariel with a repetition of the former torments inflicted upon her by the "blue-eyed hag" Sycorax, from which he had relieved her:—

"She did confine thee,  
By help of her most potent ministers,  
And in the most unattainable rage,  
Into a cloven pine, within which rift,  
Imprison'd, thou didst painfully remain  
A dozen years."

guarded Miranda, a scene full of passion and dramatic vigour ensues. Caliban makes hideous love to the gentle child of Prospero—with purest virgin nobleness of heart she defies and scorns the maddened demon. The howls of the pent-up Sycoorax mingle in the singing; a chorus of demons sounds from the earth, the air, and the trees; and Miranda, despairing of help, is about to plunge a poignard into her heart, when the breathing of the second wish seals up her senses in a soft and balmy sleep. Snatching up his insensible burden, Caliban gazes for an instant upon her charms, and then starting to hear a joyous refrain echoing through the woods, bears Miranda swiftly away. He dares not go far. The new-heard choristers and the shipwrecked crew, headed by Stephano and Trinculo, are making merry upon the wine saved from the wreck; they perceive and stop the monster. A skilfully-managed and very dramatic scene follows. The sailors pause in their Bacchanal chorus to mock Caliban, and threaten him, unless he gives up the still sleeping Miranda. The monster gives them fair words, promises to lead them to Prospero's cell, and make them kings in the island. Then the festivities are renewed—Caliban and the seamen drink, shout, and exult in chorus—until, in the midst of the uproar, Miranda, roused from her charmed sleep, snatches the enchanted bouquet, which the drunken monster has dropped, and fleeing from the coarsely-jovial company, stays his pursuit by forming in her mind the third wish,—the sailors and their goblin guest are rooted to the spot whereon they stood.

The third act introduces Antonio and Alonso bewailing their hard fate, and the supposed death of Ferdinand. Prospero appears, and, unrecognised by his brother and the King of Naples, reproaches them with their crimes, but promises pardon to the repentant. The Duke and King,

subdued and terror-stricken, follow the potent magician through the groves, and listen in terror and wonder as the enchanter summons Ariel to his presence. Melancholy accents—the voice of the charm-imprisoned spirit—respond to the call, and inform Prospero of the triumphant malice of Caliban. A movement of the sage's arm suffices to break the weakly spell; and then, in real wrath and terror, he informs his humbly-following companions that if his daughter is lost their doom is sealed also. And where all this time is the gentle lady? After her escape from Caliban and the crew she wanders wildly through the thickets, until her steps are arrested by a voice—a thrilling, terrible voice—sounding from beneath the ponderous rock,—the voice of Sycorax, now lulled into hypocritical softness:—

“Be counselled by me, gentle lady. The stranger, Ferdinand, who now reposes in thy father's grot, is a cruel enchanter. Under the guise of submission he would weave his subtle spells round thy sire and thee. But one way of defeating his malice remains. Thy poignard hangs by thy girdle—draw it, smite him, and be delivered!”

The scene again changes to the grotto. Ferdinand, worn out with unaccustomed toil, sleeps tranquilly; Miranda enters, the dagger gleaming in her hand. Was the voice of the rocks a friendly warning or a demon lure? She hesitates; an infernal chorus repeats the warning in bursts of wild and fitful music. She hesitates no longer—the dagger is uplifted and the blow descending, when, breaking through the anticipatory pause, is heard again the Bacchanal chorus of the sailors, led by Caliban, as they approach the grot. Roused by earthly music, Ferdinand starts from his sleep as the seamen kneel around him, acknowledge in him their future king, and, better still,

in Miranda their future queen! Caliban rages with impotent spite. Suddenly a glorious vengeance flashes before his eyes. There lie the magic flowers,—a bound and a clutch, and they are his!

"May all before me be sunk into the bowels of the earth!"

In vain! no convulsion rends the solid ground. The third wish has been already accomplished—the power of the flowers is gone out of them.

And once again the scene changes to where Prospero, his repentant brother, and the King sit glittering on their thrones. The last bright gleam of glory plays around the charmed isle. The enfranchised Ariel gambols aloft! The doom of the baffled Caliban is pronounced; it is to remain in the island alone with his rock-pent dam. Suddenly a brave fleet appears upon the sea, newly equipped, to carry Prospero back to his recovered dukedom; Ferdinand and Miranda to their prospective kingdom. Spirits rejoice in air and men on earth; the glittering pageant flashes before all senses; and thus, in glory and in triumph, the music-clad poem ends with an uncontrollable outburst of wildest choral harmony!

The cast of the opera of *The Tempest* may fairly be looked upon as an event in the annals of the lyric drama. In the range of European *sopranos*, no voice could be found so fitted as that of Madame Sontag by its transparent silveriness of tone, its pearly purity, and its bird-like flexibility, to warble the music, and pour forth in song the gentle soul of Miranda. An actress consummate in elaborating the most highly-finished details of art, and most at home in all that is in itself beautiful and true and pure, the very cardinal qualities of Madame Sontag point to her also as a fitting dramatic representative of the artless desert-reared daughter of the magician.

The elfin character of Ariel was beset with difficulties which seemed almost insurmountable; but Scribe, like the exiled Duke of Milan, also holds the wand of a magician. The sportive Ariel said—

"Do you love me, master?"

And the result has proved that Scribe, like Prospero, has replied—

"Dearly, my delicate Ariel."

In the Enchanted Isle, which the Duke has wrested from the deposed Caliban—an isle full of

"Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight"—

the invisible sprites wait upon the commands of Ariel, and sing her whereabouts; whilst the sylph-like form, the buoyant step, the undulating motion, finds its fitting exponent in one whose gift it is to interpret the very soul of music—Carlotta Grisi.\* Here is there ample verge for the "action eloquent" with which this wonderful mime is instinct. The radiant yet mocking smile of the trickery

\* *Bévue plus d'un*

*Bévue* is, literally, *grosseur, grandeur, sauteuse*—*pos, pince, pousse*—and it is the poetry of her spiritual dancing, the perfect echo of every sprite-like look and gesture to the musical thought, and the difficulty of expressing the effect produced in English, that conjures up the Greek.

"Then the voices, the dances obey,"

feebly expresses the pregnant brevity of the words which convey the idea of the personified step of the dancer listening to and interpreting the soul of music. But no language can do justice to the intellectual character of Carlotta Grisi's art. She will be a most quaint and delicate Ariel.

spirit will as a bright spell shed its light around, and her attendant creatures of the elements will at her behest—

"Before you can say 'Come and go,'  
And breathe twice and cry, 'So, so!'  
Each one, tripping on his toe,  
Will be there with mop and mow."

In the character of Caliban, Lablache will add another and a new portrait to that brilliant gallery of impersonations with which his name is identified throughout Europe. Powers capable of the representing alike the terrible and the grotesque will find their appointed mission in the assumption and portrayal of that wildly-imaginative group of qualities—the horrible, the bizarre, the highly-tragic, and the brutishly-malignant—the fusion and blending of which in one strangely-conceived and skilfully-wrought out personage make up the character of Prospero's slave.

The part of Ferdinand furnishes an almost *beau idéal* character for music suitable to a pure and refined tenor voice; while that of Prospero, with all its sustained dignity and grave consciousness of honour, affords those materials which Coletti knows so well how to make use of so as to produce one of those perfectly-finished and highly-artistic personations which are associated with his name.

In the production of *The Tempest* Mr. Lumley will have discharged a duty long since undertaken by him, and fulfilled a pledge anxiously looked forward to by his subscribers and the public. That the work has not been already accomplished must be attributed to events over which he had no control. It is generally known that it was the wish of Mr. Lumley that the immortal composer of the music of the *Midsummer Night's Dream* should extend still further his well-earned fame by the production of a companion opera from the works of Shakespeare.

To the great German musician this would have been a labour of sympathy and love. But he was not permitted to undertake it. Smitten down in the prime of his manhood and the flush of his fame, Mendelssohn sleeps in a hallowed grave. Need it be said that his memory will rest green in the heart of nations so long as art is cherished and the true and the beautiful appreciated?

Thus disappointed, Mr. Lumley was not baffled. One star had set—others were still rising in the firmament of music; a European reputation, founded upon a brilliant series of musical triumphs, seemed to designate M. Halévy as the most fitting composer to supply the place of him whom all lament. A style at once rich and fervid, highly imaginative and deeply passionate, with a peculiar power of infusing into all his works that vivid dramatic feeling, that various and vigorous dramatic colouring, which is now become essential to operatic success,—qualities such as these it was which pointed to M. Halévy as a worthy substitute for him of whom death had deprived us. Those who know that it is one of the most glorious attributes of genius to be able fully to appreciate and to revere genius, will not be surprised when they are told that M. Halévy embraced with reverend enthusiasm the privilege of associating his name in a new artistic development with that of the greatest dramatist of the world, and that the master justly deemed that inspiration for immortal music would be found in the charm of immortal verse.









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